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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Corps awards Phase 2a for San Antonio's Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration Project

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, awarded a \$22 million contract for phase 2a of the San Antonio Channel Improvement Project, Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation project to Zachry Construction Corp., Inc. of San Antonio, Texas, through a competitive, firm-fixed priced contract.

With funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, construction for phase 2a is anticipated to begin by February and will create many job opportunities for in communities surrounding San Antonio. The Phase 2a portion of the project is anticipated to be complete in 2011.

The Mission Project is a four-phased, multi-year channel reconstruction project and is part of an on-going series of investments by Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the San Antonio River Foundation and the San Antonio River Authority, which serves as the local sponsor of the project.

"None of this could have happened without the dedication and commitment of our partners, as this team approach has produced the needed synergy to move the project along," said Col. Richard J. Muraski, the Corps' Fort Worth District Commander.

The Corps awarded the phase 1 contract in May 2008, to restore the first mile of river starting at Lone Star Boulevard. Phase 2a will add an additional mile of aquatic restoration and recreational features to the nearly completed phase 1 portion of the project. Features of phase 2a include: excavation of over 800,000 cubic yards of soil, 40 acres of riparian habitat, over 2,200 native trees, 2 acres of embayment, six riffle structures, 1.2 miles of hike and bike trails and one instream pedestrian footbridge.

As the local funding partner, Bexar County will add further visitor tax dollars over and above the local match to include "betterments" to phase 2a. These locally funded "betterments" will serve to further enhance the federally funded base project features. The anticipated phase 2a "betterments" include: an improved street connection at Theo Avenue that supports a "portal" to Mission Concepción connecting the hike and bike trail along the Mission Reach to the historic mission; as well as upgrades to trails, pavilions, and the addition of a fly over bridge at Concepción Creek.

"Zachry Construction has a record of producing exceptional work both here locally and throughout the world," Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff said. "Zachry is a welcomed new member of Bexar County's already strong partnership with the San Antonio River Authority and the Army Corps of Engineers."

The Mission Reach project makes up the southern 8-mile portion of the overall San Antonio River Improvements Project. This is part of a larger effort to re-establish ecological, cultural and recreational connections along the San Antonio River through the heart of San Antonio from Hildebrand Ave. south to

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Loop 410 South. Major excavation and construction of the Mission Reach is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2013 and the remaining trees planted by 2015.

“In addition to local contractor Zachry Construction Corp. being awarded the work, it's important to note that their price was 35 percent below the federal government's construction cost estimate for phase 2a,” said Gaylon Oehlke, Chairman of the San Antonio River Authority. “SARA has great experience working with Zachry, including our recent work on the San Antonio River Improvements Project Museum Reach segment where they finished that project on time and under budget.”

With four historic Spanish Colonial Missions situated along the 8-mile Mission Reach, the project will also restore and reconnect the historic ecological context for these Missions.

“This project supports a ‘greener’ Corps by restoring a seriously degraded aquatic ecosystem of the San Antonio River to a functional, healthy riverine system,” added Muraski. “We are doing this by applying proven science-based engineering techniques to recreate a natural, healthy system while maintaining the existing level of flood protection.”

The total cost of the base 8-mile Mission Reach project in federal, local and private contributions is approximately \$232 million. With the \$39.7 million additional funding from Bexar County for “betterments,” the total cost of the Mission Reach, with all funding sources accounted for, is \$271.9 million.

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